

**Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, July 7, 1844,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, July 7, 1844.

My Dear General: I received your kind letter of the 25: June expressing solicitude about my health. It is some compensation to me for suffering to find that I have had so much of your sympathy. I have been for two weeks out at my little farm, which is in a high healthy region 5 miles north of the city and its fine pure air and water has quite restored not only my health but my strength. My son Montgomery, whose court does not meet till September, is with me now, and by relieving me in part of labor for my paper has contributed to my convalescence.

The second day after I received your letter, before that I got yesterday, I replied to it in one of six pages. I fear that it has miscarried as it seems you had not received it on the 25: of last month. In that letter I gave you the aspect of our politics as they appeared then to me. So far I think every thing continues to look well for our party. I have no fear for Polk, but from treachery. My only apprehension is as to the sincerity and fidelity of Calhoun's friends. I told [you] from the beginning that I did not believe Calhoun wished the Texas annexation, or he would not have delayed sending in the Treaty a week merely to write and send in with it, his Packenham letter to embarrass it at the threshold with the Slave question, which produced the difficulty in admitting Missouri into the Union. Nobody knew better than Calhoun the effect of thus making annexation a sectional instead of a national question as you say it should be. Yet he wantonly made it sectional to defeat the measure and make it ground of collision between the north and south after

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he had reason to believe from the Globe's article that Mr. Van Buren and his friends would go for the annexation by Congress, if there was no barrier interposed, and now you see from the Report of McDuffie's speech in the last Richmond Enquirer, that while he expresses great solicitude for union with Texas, he not only advises but argues strenuously to convince the people of that country that they should not come into our federal union. I sincerely believe, that Calhoun and his old Junto of conspirators are more than ever anxious to separate the South from the north. They want Texas only as a bone of contention.

General McKay of N.C. and others of the most impartial members of the House, assured me that it was perfectly evident that Calhoun's friends did not wish the Tariff Bill to pass. Dixon H. Lewis left the House the day before the vote was to be taken after having pledged himself to stay and vote on it. His pretence was that a vote was to be taken about Texas when in fact no vote was to be taken but an idle discussion was going on to decide whether the Treaty should be considered in secret session or with open doors. Black of Georgia, the most devout friend Calhoun has, also absented himself—and every man known to be under Calhoun's influence in the north, especially the Connecticut members voted against it. Rhett and Saunders, and other of his Southern friends dodged the votes on amendments so as to let them in, to defeat the Bill. 1

1 James I. McKay of N. C., Dixon H. Lewis of Ala., Edward J. Black of Ga., R. Barnwell Rhett of S. C., Romulus M. Saunders of N. C.

The truth is these even wanted the Tariff defeated and Texas defeated and I fear will endeavor in an underhand way to defeat Polk to alienate the feelings of the Southern States from the Northern. They think that it will make Charleston and South Carolina the centre of a New Confederacy with a back country reaching to the Del Norte and that Calhoun and his adjuncts would be the Supreme disposers of all its concerns. These men have been intriguers and conspirators for years. They have persuaded themselves, that it is the part of patriotism to deliver the South from the North by a second machination[?] and

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their designs are so connected with selfishness and ambition thwarted by the Democracy and the Whiggery of the whole union to both of which they have appealed in vain for confidence and favor, that the scheme of dissolution has become hardened by habit and predilection into a second nature with these men. You might as well hope that they could change the color of their eyes as their characters in this respect, and my sole motive in touching them at all on this subject was to prevent the impression that they could identify the Democracy, especially that of the South, with them in this respect.

I was present when Benton was charging home on McDuffie, the disunion projects which Rhett had broached in Calhoun's organ, which he edits in this city; the projects which he went to South Carolina to get up meetings to support. Benton was provoked by McDuffie's calling in 0325 301 question the motives on which [he] acted in relation to Texas and made a fair opening for the retort against those who made the issue of "Texas with or without the Union." The reply was more vehement in manner and unsparing in expression than any I ever heard from Benton. He charged a dissolution of the Union as their aim and when he alluded to the reception they would get from you, if their treason was ever unveiled to your eye, the effect was electric on the Senate and galleries which were full. McDuffie was evidently vanquished and made no reply to the appalling accusation which Benton approached McDuffie to make, accosting him personally in his manner and giving it emp[h]asis by striking a heavy blow on his desk, when declaring that he would not like Brutus fall upon his sword, but use it to strike down disunion.

Old Adams sat near me a little to one side of Benton on the seat behind. When Benton had ended his phillipic in return to McDuffie's Phillipic, Adams accosted Benton as stepping out of his seat he passed by him. Adams, I think, complimented him on his speech, as death blow to the disunion plots. Benton thanked [him] and said "We are too old [for] revolutionary schemes—we must stand by the Constitution and the Union." I asked Benton afterwards to what he alluded when he spoke of Adams's standing by the constitution and he told me that Adams had recently introduced resolutions similar to his own, denying Tyler's right to make war or enter into engagements involving war,

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without the consent of Congress. He was willing he said to encourage Adams in doing the only good thing he had ever known him attempt besides his defence of you.

Benton no doubt considered Adams's Resolution a defence of his position and felt grateful to him for that and the sentiment he expressed when he delivered his speech. I have not the least fear that Benton will quit his party. You will find him as zealous for Polk and Texas as you are. He has gone to canvass Missouri to support the Ticket. But whatever may be his course, you may rely on it, he will not swerve the Globe from its true orbit. You will have observed that I go for Texas without regard to the conquest of Mexico. I took this ground in commenting on Benton's Bill and I differ from him altogether as to the English interference. I agree with [him] however in believing that Calhoun and his associates are for keeping Texas out of the Union to make it the means of separation between the slave holding and non Slave-holding States and a part of a New Confederacy of the former.

But I tire you with Politics. I have put Emuckfau to Boston and have ensured a colt. You see I am determined to have some of the Hermitage family on the course. Would to god I could see you here once more to breathe your blessings on the Govt. of the country. Cannot you float down the Cumberland and up the Ohio and slide along in the cars to Washington to instal your Tennessee President. How it would rejoice the hearts of all my family to have you established in our house on the coming in of the new republican Era. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson and Rachel and Sammy and Andrew would find a home made happier than 0326 302 the Hermitage. Mrs. J. owes the East a visit. And if she could bring you with her, she would have a nation to acclaim her. Love to all. My wife and son and daughter unite with me in prayers for your health.

Yours very truly